

tions was altogether indefensible in principle. 'Practically it was altogether unimportant/ ¹ The origin and result of the commercial restrictions have led to much controversy. In 1779 John Hely-Hutchinson, in the second of his letters on The Commercial Restraints of Ireland, had set forth the grievances of Ireland on this point. These letters were edited in 1882 by W. G. Carroll, with a number of useful notes. Lecky has restated the case against the act in his History of Ireland. On the other hand, William Cunningham, in an article on The Repression of the Woollen Manufacture in Ireland,² minimises the damage done by the acts and exalts the motives underlying them. His conclusion is that 'there was little if any positive damage done to the native Irish, though a hindrance was imposed on their subsequent progress. . . . The real grounds for the introduction and enforcement of the repressive measures¹ were * a short-sighted, but public-spirited regard for the political interests of the realm as a whole/ This paradox, however, is not proved. Miss A. E. Murray in her History of the Commercial and Financial Relations between England and Ireland (1905) demonstrates that the consequence of these restrictions on the woollen trade was serious and far-reaching. In fact the traditional view, with some small emendations, is the correct one.

At the time, far more interest was excited

in England
by the question of the resumption of William
III's grants
of confiscated lands in Ireland than by the
restrictions
imposed on trade there. A clause added to
the land-
tax bill by the Commons in 1699 ordered seven
commis-
sioners selected by the House to take account
of the property
forfeited during the late war. The Lords
protested against

⁵ VI, 2772 (xxiii).

² English Historical Review, i. 277-94.